2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

173 with its Turkish neighbors in the time of Toktamysh-Khan. We may be dealing here with an older Turkish tale of the foundling or stranger, Idāgā (Elliei), which was later inserted in the Toktamysh cycle. At any rate, we must admit that this tradition was transplanted on the banks of the Lena by Turkish immigrants and that Elliei should be regarded as a representative of Turkdom.

Finally, I wish to refer to still another incident in the Yakut traditions, which has been widely distributed among the Turkic tribes of Siberia. I refer to the passage in which the Yakut hero, Tygyn, presents the first Russians as much land for their use as could be contained in an oxskin. The Russians outwitted him, cutting the hide into strips narrow enough to extend round a piece of land sufficient to build a fortress on it in the future. We find the same tradition among the Tobol-Tatars and Baraba-Tatars, according to which Kutsum-Khan makes a similar promise to the Russian conqueror of Siberia, Yermak, and is outwitted by the latter.

As the same trick was used in the foundation of Carthage, we are concerned here with a tradition which was very early transmitted to the Turks from the south.

When an incident like this trick is found in the traditions of two different peoples who had no previous intercourse, and one of whom were the Russian conquerors, it may be explained, I believe, by the fact that since the Russians built fortresses and cities in the midst of nomadic cattle breeders, or wandering hunters, the tradition of city-building may refer to the Russians alone, especially since the former connections of the Yakut with China and Central Asia were already long forgotten.

Now, let us turn to Pekarsky,[1] who says:—

The question of the origin of the Yakut is one of the most obscure in their history. We have at our disposal no authentic historical data to throw decisive light on this question. Therefore, the investigator must draw to his aid the results of linguistic, archaeological, anthropological, and ethnographical investigations, to obtain some indications as to the origin of this gifted people who have preserved, despite very unfavorable conditions of life, their comprehensive language and the products of their creative genius, and, what is more remarkable, their physical type. Not only did the Yakut assimilate with surrounding tribes, but they are themselves assimilating their neighbors more or less, frequently to such an extent as to eliminate their native language entirely.

Investigators of the Yakut long ago began to find interest in their former fate. This is shown by the collection and publication of Yakut origin traditions. In the absence of chronicles these traditions may give certain historical data.

Prehistory

● 172 In prehistoric times, beginning with the northern retreat of the glaciers, many southern peoples who had to adjust themselves to the severe conditions of life in the northern forests or the polar tundra, occupied Siberia. Some of the newcomers, like the Tungus, lost many of their former culture traits, and became reindeer breeders or hunters, while others, like the Yakut, were able in the far north to retain their cattle-breeding culture of the Central Asiatic steppes. But this north-

[1] Pekarsky, *ibid.*

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

ward migration was involuntary; the southerners were forced out from their former habitat by the competition of alien tribes. Naturally, in the course of their wandering, they left some traces which have been disclosed by the work of archaeologists. Skeletal finds also have shown that northern Siberia was primarily inhabited by a long-headed people of the Nordic type who had come from the west, and who were assimilated or else annihilated by Mongoloid newcomers from the south. Many of these questions still await solution through the work of archaeologists. 172 ●

We have some knowledge of prehistoric Yakut monuments through the recent work of Russian archaeologists, chiefly Petri, whose excavations in the region of Lake Baikal revealed many remains of a horse and cattle breeding tribe, in all probability, the prehistoric Yakut.[1]

The identifications by the chief zoologist of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Bialanitski-Birula, of animal bones found at the Murino sites and the caves of Orkhon show that these are chiefly the remains of domesticated animals—of oxen, rams, goats, and horses. Remains of wild animals, the products of hunting, are very scarce, proving that the people were cattle breeders. Besides, no traces of agriculture were found to the north of Lake Baikal, presenting negative evidence that the prehistoric inhabitants were herders. Further, Bialanitski-Birula [231] pointed out that the ox of these people, like that of the Yakut, was a cross-breed of the yak. Among the iron arrows were found many with bifurcated heads, a characteristic of Yakut arrows.[2] The iron knives and scissors found have the same distinguishing marks as Yakut knives, as will be shown in the discussion of their iron industry. The horseshoe [492] found in the excavations is exactly like the Yakut horseshoe; it is narrow, with holes for nails and one calk in the middle. The Siberian natives, even in stony mountainous places, seldom shoe their horses. The iron bits of an ancient bridle consisted of two unequal parts, without appendages in the corners. This may be explained by the manner in which the rider held the reins on the left side of the horse as do the present Yakut. Modern Yakut bits consist of two equal parts, a form which may be regarded as having been adopted from the Russians, from whom the Yakut learned to harness horses to sledges and carts, for which long reins are necessary. Formerly, the Yakut used the horse only as a riding and pack animal. Appurtenances of horse harness show that the people bred horses. An iron sickle for hay making was found by Petri. It is quite different from the Russian form and resembles the present Yakut sickle.

[1] Petri, E. B., The Prehistoric Blacksmiths of Cis-Baikalia. Chita, 1923. (In Russian).
[2] See Sieroszevski, V. A., The Yakut. Vol. 1 (*Published by the Imperial Russian Geographical Society, St. Petersburg*, 1896 in Russian).

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

● 172 An iron hook for digging edible roots and plants and iron fish hooks were also found.

In the caves of Orkhon were pieces of birchbark sewn with horsehair, which is the characteristic Yakut sewing material for the seams on birchbark baskets, kumiss vessels, and the covering of summer tents. Other Siberian peoples, as well as the Russians, manufacture jointed birchbark vessels. The Tungus sometimes sew their birchbark vessels very roughly with sinew thread. The fine technique of horsehair sewing for practical and ornamental purposes will be discussed later (Pages 176, 212).

The remains of square earth huts are reminiscent of the present winter dwellings of the Yakut. The ornamentation of clay vessels, fragments of which were found, is similar to the present Yakut decorative motives; it remains to be demonstrated, however, that the old Yakut potters brought their ceramic art to Yakut Province. Neither Tungus nor Buryat use clay vessels or previously knew the art of pottery making.

Among the finds is a steel for striking fire. There is evidence to show that the Yakut passed directly from neolithic culture to an iron age. Fragments of bronze kettles found in some supposed Yakut sites may be from kettles imported from the south. That the Yakut were and still are skilful iron workers is an acknowledged fact.

Spindle whorls were made of a kind of hard stone coal (slate?). Of particular interest was one spindle, found in Kurumchinakh, which was covered with writing (letters). In comparing these characters with those of various alphabets, it may readily be observed that many of them are similar, as far as they can be deciphered, to the characters of the Orkhon alphabet. There were thirty-seven symbols of which twenty-one are letters and sixteen indistinct, effaced signs, including perhaps mere scratches. The twenty-one letters appear to be an exact reproduction of the Yenisei-Orkhon characters. There are eighteen consonants and three vowels. Some of the characters are repeated and in all there are ten different symbols. The discovery of these writings so far to the north is of great interest. The ancestors of the Yakut, who, in remote times, emigrated from northern Mongolia, undoubtedly knew the Orkhon alphabet and this may explain the Yakut traditions as to the loss of their writings on the way to Yakutsk Province.[1]

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We must analyze some discrepancies in the account of the finds representing supposedly old Yakut culture. The excavations were made in old earth huts and caves. Thus this horse and cattle-breeding tribe must have been nomadic, yet, at the same time, must have had permanent dwellings. This may be explained by their double occupation. Iron

[1] [Cf. pp. 45, 53, 55, category 116 -- ANALYST]

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

mining, smelting, forging, and smithing required a sedentary life. 172 ●
While some families of a clan, or even some members of a family, were engaged in the iron industry, their relatives nomadized with their herds. Caves may have served as temporary shelters during the winter when the wet walls became frozen and a fire was used as protection from the cold.

Objects of Yakut culture were traced by Petri and other Siberian archaeologists in excavations not only in Cis-Baikalia, but also in the valleys of the Birusa, Angara, Murina, Kuda, Selenga, Kichega, and Tunka rivers; on the upper course of the Lena, and in the Orkhon country. Thus, the Yakut must have been the horse and cattle breeding tribe which formerly lived around Lake Baikal and in the region of the upper course of the Lena. Having been separated from the common Turkic stem, they were gradually forced to the north, through Cis-Baikalia, the northern districts of Irkutsk Province, and then along the valley of the Lena to their present abode. Archaeological research along this route and in Yakut Province may give a firmer foundation for the above conjectures as to Yakut prehistory. Unfortunately, nothing has been accomplished in this field of investigation in the past.

But where are we to search for the original home of the Yakut? We have previously noted that one tradition connects the Yakut with the Kirghiz.[1] Radloff connects the Yakut with the Soyot or Uriankhai of the Sayan region. Samoilovich, the student of the Turkic languages, classifies the Yakut and Uigur in one group.

In connection with an iron tobacco pipe of Chinese form, found in his Cis-Baikalian excavations, Petri states that the Yakut also manufacture such pipes at present and refers to Sieroszevski[1] who remarks that the pipe pattern was adopted from the Chinese by the ancestors of the Yakut in remote times when they lived somewhere in central Asia and had an active intercourse with China.

Historical Migrations

In the thirteenth century, the Yakut were already in the region 173
of Lake Baikal, having been isolated from other Turkic tribes by the 167
Mongol invasion of that century. The Mongolian Buryat, who came from the banks of the Upper Amur, forced the Yakut, with their horses and cattle, to move down the Lena River. On their way to their present habitat, they fought the war-like Tungus, who finally retreated to the mountainous portions of Yakut Province and the Yakut occupied the Lena River Valley to its mouth, and all its tributaries. After the occu-

[1] *Ibid*, 345, Fig. 61.

[1] [Cf. p. 54, category 539 -- ANALYST]

4: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

they do not use fur sleeping bags as do the Russians and some of the Tungus, nor do they sleep dressed in double fur clothing like the Chukchee and Koryak. They simply cover their naked shoulders with a hare skin blanket. There is a Russian proverb which says: Keep the feet warm, the head cold. The Yakut follow the opposite custom. When traveling in winter with Yakut drivers it was noted that they lay with heads and not their feet near the campfire. Usually one of the men stayed awake to tend the fire, but it sometimes happened that everyone fell asleep, the fire was extinguished, the blankets were lifted by the wind, exposing the naked backs of the sleepers to the frost which was covered with rime,—and they continued to sleep.

Fig. 46. Costume of Poor Yakut Children.

Pottery

In our discussion of dwellings we noted the Yakut use of clay to cover their earth huts and to rub their stoves. For these purposes they use an inferior clay called *cuor*, meaning simply, earth, soil. Clay for pottery is called *tuoi*. It cannot be said that Yakut pottery reaches great perfection, since the ceramic art is still in a low stage of development. However, clay pots are made everywhere in Yakutsk Province, except in its northern districts. The Yakut of the Verkhoyansk and Kolymsk districts and the northern part of the Viliuisk District neither manufacture nor use pottery.

Pottery-making requires the joint labor of men and women, the former find the suitable clay and the latter construct the pots. Pottery clay is found in the valleys of mountain rivers, usually forming a layer two meters thick under the black surface soil. That the Yakut brought the art of pottery-making with them from their original home in the south may be proven by the potsherds excavated in the Baikal region. Neither the Buryat, the present inhabitants of that region, nor the Mongols generally, ever made pottery. The potter's wheel and such refinements of the art as polishing, glazing, or painting, are all unknown to the Yakut, so that their pottery-making did not extend beyond the confines of the rudimentary technique.

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

time. Yakut pots are easily broken and remain porous until milk has been repeatedly boiled in them. The rims, the upper part, and sometimes the whole pot, are ornamented by impressions made with wooden stamps (*kūōs oyūlūr mas*, wood for ornamenting pottery). These design motives have special names; for instance, Fig. 53*d*, is called *tyñyrachtach torduya;* Fig. 53*g* is *biltägir*.

Though pottery-making was known to the Yakut since neolithic times it never developed into a real art. This may be explained partly by their early acquaintance with the manufacture of metals, particularly iron, which among the Yakut preceded that of bronze. Clay vessels came to be used more frequently as containers for liquids than as cooking utensils. However, fluids cannot be kept in them a long time without spoiling. After cooking the pot is cleaned with an iron scraper called *kāsīr* (Fig. 48) and dried.

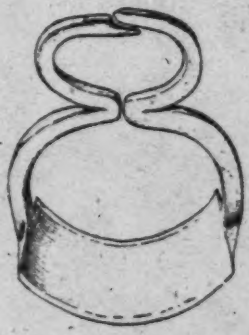

Fig. 48 (70-8775). An Iron Scraper for Clay Cooking Pots.

The forms of clay vessels vary; the commonest is an egg-like shape, the flat bottom of which is much smaller than the mouth. As may be seen from the illustration (Fig. 49*a–d*) the tea pots and charcoal stoves (Fig. 49*a*, *c*) to keep them warm are made after the Russian fashion. The size ranges from small cups for children to vessels capable of holding four to six gallons.

Additional evidence of the antiquity of the industry among the Yakut appears in the Turkic names for pottery-making implements and vessels. A clay pot is called *kūōs;* a metal kettle is called *salyr*. Even in places where, as in the northern districts of Yakut Province, no pottery is made at present, the word *kūōs* is well known and used as a linear measure. In terms of linear measure one may say, "one pot," "two pots," "pot of a walker, horse, or ox rider." For *kūōs* (pot) the Yakut understand a distance of from seven to twelve versts (from 6.6 to 8 miles). Translating *kūōs* in terms of time, it means a period during which a pot with meat for an average family is cooked. In Afghanistan *kūōs* is used as a linear measure of about eighteen miles. Böhtlingk[1] distinguishes the word *kūōs* as a unit of time from *kōs* as a linear measure as does Pekarsky in his Yakut-Russian dictionary, where he interprets *kōs* as a term for a day's journey from one camping place to another.

The Yakut do not know how to wash clay or to temper it, using it as it is found, with all its impurities, quartz and other non-plastic materials

[1] Böhtlingk, *ibid.*

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

At the market at Yakutsk I have seen white clay pottery made with the potter's wheel. These wares were made by Russians. I could not learn, however, the origin of the white clay.

The Yakut of the northern districts of Yakut Province, Verkhoyansk and Kolymsk, of the lower course of the Lena, and of the villages on the Olenek, Khatanga, and Anabara rivers, neither use pottery nor have any knowledge of its manufacture, but utilize iron and copper utensils. It is curious that they do not know that their southern relatives from whom they separated about two hundred fifty years ago still use and make pottery. This is surprising since there are passages in folk tales referring to clay pots.

The fate of Yakut pottery demonstrates the possible differences in the sequence of development of culture. Among civilized nations the ceramic art has been perfected simultaneously with the development in the production and manufacture of metals. With the Yakut, as with other Siberian tribes, the opposite occurred. For instance, the present Kamchadal and Koryak do not know that their forefathers made pottery, but archaeological excavations[1] by the author on Kamchatka Peninsula and within the territory of the Koryak brought to light ancient specimens of their pottery. Compared with the Koryak and Kamchadal, however, the Yakut are relatively much more advanced in culture having, in the past, been affiliated with other civilized Turkic nations of southwestern Asia.

Metals

At present the Yakut are acquainted with iron, copper, bronze, silver, gold, tin, and lead. All these metals, except tin and lead, still retain their old Turkic names: iron, *timir;* copper, *allan*, red copper, *jas allan*, yellow copper; brass, *üös allan* or *ürüñ allan;* bronze, *čyañ* (after Sieroszevski); silver, *kömüs* or *ürüñ kömüs* (white *kömus*); gold, *kysyl kömüs* (red silver); tin, *xolholyun;* lead, *sibinäs*, *xolholyun* is a Mongol word and *sibinas* a Russian word (*svinetz*).

Iron. Iron (*timir*) is historically and economically the most important metal among the Yakut who were acquainted with the reduction of iron ores and iron manufacture before reaching their present abode. There are no data to prove that they worked iron before they learned the manufacture and use of copper, bronze, and other metals. In central Siberia, on the Yenisei and Angara rivers, ancient sites have been discovered on which remains of the late neolithic period were found

[1] Jochelson, Waldemar, Archaeological Investigations in Kamchatka (*Carnegie Institution of Washington*, No. 388, Washington 1928), 69–76.

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

mixed with Iron Age objects. One may therefore surmise that places abandoned in the neolithic period were later occupied by iron workers. In the Irkutsk District Professor Petri discovered a genuine iron (not mixed with other metals) age site in the valley of the Murina River, a tributary of the Kuda, which empties into the Angara River. Remains of earth huts similar to those of the present Yakut were found. The people were cattle breeders as was evidenced by the bones of oxen. Here were also found fragments of pottery, slag, furnaces, pipes, and a prehistoric mine shaft leading to layers of iron ore.

On one site was discovered part of a clay furnace about two feet high and one and a half feet in diameter, above which were alternating layers of iron ore and charcoal. The mixture was fired and air was blown in from below through pipes by means of bellows. During the smelting process charcoal and ore were added from above. The metal thus obtained was removed by destroying the furnace. Remains of such iron foundries have been discovered as far west as the Minussinsk country, i.e., over the entire route alleged to have been traversed by the Yakut to reach the Lena Valley.

At present, iron mining is concentrated in different localities of Viliui and Yakutsk districts. Some *nasleg*s of the Markhinsky and Verkhne-Viliuisk *uluses* in the Viliuit District are noted for their iron mining and smelting, as well as some *nasleg*s of the East Kangalasky *ulus*, namely the clans living on the Small Batom and Tyukan rivers in Yakutsk District.

The present process of iron mining and smelting does not deviate from the prehistoric method described above. Iron is reduced to the metallic state, as described by Sieroszevski[1] and Maak[2] in jug-shaped furnaces 3 feet 8 inches high and 3 feet wide at their greatest width, which is usually about 14 inches from the base. The fire clay walls of the furnace are 1½ to 2 inches thick. The furnace is enclosed in a log framework filled in with clay to retain the heat and make it firm. In the lower part of the furnace is a damper for removing the pig iron. Before the operation the damper is closed and covered with a layer of clay. A fire is built and ore and charcoal placed in the furnace from above. The fire is kept burning by blowing on it with bellows and ore and charcoal are added fifteen to twenty times. After the pig iron is separated from slag and repeatedly heated and hammered, soft iron and occasionally steel is obtained. The Yakut prefer it to the imported

[1]Sieroszevski, *ibid.*, 381.
[2]Maak, *ibid.*

ART

172 2/2 On the route followed by the Yakut during their northward migration have been discovered many *pisanitzy*, or prehistoric pictographs, on rocks. Thus P. P. Khoroshikh in a description of the *pisanitzy* in the Irkutsk country published in 1924[1] illustrates two kinds of writing represented by conventional and realistic figures. Some of the conventional signs are regarded as old Turkic or as the so-called Uigur letters. The realistic figures represent men and animals (horses, reindeer, elk, goats, bulls, and birds). Some archaeologists relate these rock drawings and engravings to magical practices, but it seems unlikely that figures drawn or engraved with such great feeling for form were produced by the artists for any other reason than the mere love of the task.

532 The carvings of the modern Yakut, however, lack all artistic merit and can in no way be compared, for instance, with those of their eastern neighbors, the Koryak, whose sculpture in miniature not only surpasses the art of the European cave dwellers, but of the modern Eskimo. The vivacity and artistic execution of some Koryak carvings is remarkable. The characteristic posture and movements of animals are rendered with such realism as to produce a vivid image in the mind of the spectator and testify to the great skill and æsthetic taste of the artist.[2] On the other hand, the human and animal carvings of the Yakut are rigid figures bearing only scant resemblance to their originals. Their artists appear incapable of endowing them with life and motion, as in the ivory carving (Fig. 82) representing a man on snowshoes. The next two examples are somewhat better executed (Fig. 83*a*–*b*). Fig. 83*a* represents a carving in one piece of a wooden oil lamp on a wooden stand at the base of which are carved a horse sitting on its haunches and a cow standing. Fig. 83*b* represents a saddled horse. Both these carvings were made by a Yakut near Yakutsk who may have been influenced by objects of Russian art. The oil lamp in Fig. 83*a* (*mas ysyrnyk*,[3] wooden oil lamp) is made of hard birch root; the horse of softer wood. As to the horse, it is interesting to note that a bridle is not indicated and that the saddle has no girths; the whole appears to be an unfinished piece of work. On the other hand, the animal carvings show a certain liberalism on the part of the artist. [789] To depict human and animal forms is regarded as a sin, since it is feared that any biomorphic representations may be transformed into harmful

[1] Khoroshikh, P. P., Investigations of the Stone and Iron Ages of the Irkutsk Country (*Bulletin of the Biologico-Geographical Institute of Irkutsk University*, Part 1, Irkutsk, 1924, in Russian).
[2] See Jochelson, Koryak, 654.
[3] *Ysyrnyk* is the Russian word *сырник*.

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

permafrost at a depth of one or two meters, but it does not prevent plant life. The taiga flora consists predominantly of larch, as well as some birch and pine. The animal world is rich and varied, containing squirrel, Siberian ferret, ermine, hare, fox, bear, wolverine, elk, blue fox, wild reindeer, musk deer, etc.; the species of birds are numerous and in the lakes and rivers there is an abundance of carp, different types of salmon, sturgeon, and so on.

The distribution of Yakuts throughout the territory of the Republic is extremely uneven. About nine-tenths of them are concentrated in the central regions—in the former Yakutskiy and Vilyuyskiy Okrugs. These are the two principal groups of Yakuts, the first being slightly larger in number than the second. The "Yakutiyan" (or Amga-Lena) Yakuts occupy a rectangle between the Lena, Lower Aldan and Amga, the taiga plateau, and also the adjoining left bank of the Lena. The "Vilyuy" Yakuts occupy the Vilyuy Basin. It is among these basic Yakut regions that the most typical, purely Yakut way of life has developed; it is here that it has been studied most thoroughly, particularly on the Amga-Lena plateau. The third, considerably smaller group of Yakuts is to be found in the region of Olekminsk. The Yakuts of this group are more Russified, and their way of life (though not their language) has become closer to the Russian. And, finally the last group, the smallest but most widely spread, is the population of the northern regions of Yakutiya, the basins of the Kolyma, Indigirka, Yana, Olenek and Anabar Rivers.

The northern Yakuts are distinguished by a completely original cultural way of life: in this respect they are closer to the smaller hunting-fishing peoples of the North, the Tungus and Yukagirs, than their southern fellow tribesmen. These northern Yakuts are even, here and there, known as Tungus (for example, on the upper reaches of the Olenek and Anabar), although in language they are Yakuts and call themselves Sakha.

In language the Yakuts are monolithic. There are no dialects, there are only slight regional differences; for example, in the southern part, the Amga-Lena plateau, there is akan'ye [pronunciation of an unstressed "o" as "a"] and in the north and on the Vilyuy there is okan'ye [pronunciation of the unstressed "o" as "o"].

The earliest history of the Yakut district has become known only during the last few years through archeological research, chiefly through the efforts of A. P. Okladnikov. Paleolithic campsites have been found on the Upper and Middle Lena. During the Neolithic man already inhabited the entire course of the Lena, probably together with its tributaries and other Yakutiyan rivers. The neolithic tribes led the seminomadic life of hunters and fishermen. Even then there were signs of economic and cultural ties between the population of the Lena district and the more southern, easterly and western regions of Siberia. These ties became stronger during the Bronze Age. It was even recently widely believed in science that the population of Yakutiya was itself never able to work bronze, and that it obtained bronze objects from the Baykal regions and the Upper Yenisey. It has now been proved (by Okladnikov) that bronze was worked in Yakutiya itself, and, moreover, that the population carried on lively exchange with the tribes of southern Siberia, from whom they first learned about bronze.

Were these ancient tribes of the Lena district the ancestors of the present-day Yakuts? The problem of the origin of the Yakut people is one of the most complicated ones in the history of the Siberian peoples. It has a long history of its own, in fact. But until recently the solution was sought in an entirely different way; it was assumed that in origin the Yakuts were